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# Fujiwara Teika's *Maigetsushō*

by ROBERT H. BROWER

THE single most influential figure in the history of Japanese classical poetry, Fujiwara Teika (or Sadaie) 藤原定家, 1162–1241, was the supreme arbiter of poetry in his own day, and for centuries after his death was held in religious veneration by waka and *renga* 連歌 poets alike. Teika's unique reputation rested in part upon his accomplishment as the leading figure among the many fine poets of the *Shinkokin Jidai* 新古今時代, the period of fifty-odd years in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries when revival and innovation in the native poetry were exemplified in *Shinkokinshū* 新古今集, ca. 1204, the eighth, and in many respects the greatest, of the imperially sponsored anthologies of classical verse. As one of the six compilers of this anthology, and with forty-six of his poems included in it, Teika stood at the forefront of the younger and more innovative poets of his day, and his various experiments with diction, rhetoric, and figurative language, as well as with new styles, modes, and aesthetic effects, were widely imitated by his contemporaries. After his death, his quarreling descendants were recognized as the ultimate authorities on all poetic matters, and through them Teika's influence pervaded six hundred years of Japanese poetic history.<sup>1</sup>

Not only did generations of poets seek to justify their own practice by appealing to one or another of the different poetic styles that Teika had espoused during his long life, but his every critical pronouncement was invested with the authority of sacred writ. At the same time, Teika's various treatises, collections of exemplary poems, opinions rendered as a judge of poetry contests, and the like add up to only a relatively small amount, and some of his most important and influential critical statements—for example, the prefatory essays

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<sup>1</sup> Teika's poetic achievements and the quarrels among his descendants are discussed in

Robert H. Brower & Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* [JCP], Stanford U.P., 1961, chapters 6 & 7, and in Brower & Miner, *Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time: A Thirteenth-Century Poetic Treatise and Sequence*, Stanford U.P. & Tokyo U.P., 1967; and also in Brower, *Fujiwara Teika's Hundred-Poem Sequence of the Shōji Era, 1200*, *Monumenta Nipponica* Monograph 55, 1978.

in his *Kindai Shūka* 近代秀歌 ('Superior Poems of Our Time'), ca. 1209, and *Eiga no Taigai* 詠歌大概 ('Essentials of Poetic Composition'), ca. 1222,<sup>2</sup>—consist of only a few sentences of an often cryptic and ambiguous character. These bits and pieces of a poetics of waka were jealously guarded by Teika's descendants, for these materials were the documentary proof of the family's hereditary right to legislate on poetic matters and to serve as compilers of official anthologies and judges of poetry competitions. And within a century after Teika's death, members of both the dominant and senior Nijō 二条 and the junior Reizei 冷泉 lines descended from Teika's son Tameie 為家, 1198–1275, had begun to produce forged poetic treatises and other documents that they claimed had been left to them by Teika and with which they attempted both to bolster their competing claims to superiority and to mislead their opponents.<sup>3</sup> Ironically, the preponderance of such forgeries were produced by the Nijō line, so that perceptions of Teika's poetic ideals and critical notions current among the majority of waka and *renga* poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were largely based upon spurious documents. Although most of the forgeries contain at least a modicum of truth, they frequently deal with matters that could have been of little concern to Teika, and they often distort and misrepresent his views.

A major scholarly reassessment of the heritage of Teika's poetics was carried out by the National Scholars of the Edo period and during the first half of the present century. Not surprisingly, along with a certain revulsion of taste against classical poetry in general and Teika in particular, scholarly opinion at first tended to reject as forgeries virtually all the poetic documents attributed to him. The years since World War II have seen a considerable modification of this extreme view: the more recent tendency has been to accept as genuine those works for which no compelling textual or other internal or external evidence indicates them to be spurious.

Such is the case with *Maigetsushō* 毎月抄 ('Monthly Notes'), the most extensive and comprehensive of Teika's surviving critical writings, and (assuming it to be genuine, or mostly genuine) the most important of his extant treatises. The work is crucial to an understanding of Teika's personal poetic ideals and attitudes, and of his views as to how others should approach the composition of poetry. It is certainly one of the half-dozen most important documents in the entire corpus of Japanese classical poetics.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Kindai Shūka* is translated in Brower & Miner, *Teika's Superior Poems*. The prefatory essay to *Eiga no Taigai* (but not the exemplary poems) is translated in Ryusaku Tsunoda *et al.*, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, Columbia U.P., 1958, pp. 183–84.

<sup>3</sup> JCP, pp. 343–46.

<sup>4</sup> Translations of crucial passages of *Maigetsushō* can be found in JCP, pp. 246–47 & 258–59. In addition, a complete English translation

of the treatise was published by Toshihiko and Toyo Izutsu in their *Theory of Beauty in the Classical Aesthetics of Japan*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1981, pp. 79–96. Unfortunately, this translation suffers from unnatural and in some cases incomprehensible English, glosses over numerous textual and other difficulties, and is very sparsely annotated. Another attempt is in order.

*Maigetsushō* is in fact a long letter addressed by Teika to one of his pupils, an individual of high rank who is still in the early stages of learning and who has been sending to the master each month a set of one hundred poems for criticism and marking. (The marked set, with the acceptable verses indicated by a line or circle, and perhaps a few comments as well, would be returned to the pupil for study and reflection.) These circumstances account for the title 'Monthly Notes', by which the treatise became generally known in later times, but it originally bore no title and for a generation or two after Teika's death it was known by other names—*Kyōgoku Kōmon Teikinshō* 京極黃門庭訓抄 ('Notes on Poetic Instruction by the Kyōgoku Middle Counsellor'), *Waka Teikin* 和歌庭訓 ('Instruction in Japanese Poetry'), and *Teika-kyō Shōsoku* 定家卿消息 ('The Epistle of Lord Teika') in particular.

Just who this pupil was is not known, although two traditions exist. One stems from a colophon added to a manuscript copy of the work in Kemmu 4 (1337) by Priest Ginen 凝然 or Gyōnen 凝然,<sup>5</sup> which states that the treatise 'is said to have been sent' by Teika to Fujiwara (Kujō) Ieyoshi 藤原(九条)家良, 1192–1264, commonly known as the Kinugasa Palace Minister (Kinugasa no naifu 衣笠内府).<sup>6</sup> A similar statement appears in the poetic miscellany *Seishō* 井蛙抄 ('Notes of a Frog in a Well'), ca. 1360, compiled by the poet Ton'a 頓阿, 1289–1372, and in a number of later manuscript copies of the work. The other tradition derives from two colophons, one of them dated Ōei 20 (1413), in manuscript copies of the treatise and from Priest Shōtetsu's 正徹, 1381–1459, poetic notes, *Shōtetsu Monogatari* 正徹物語, which state that the treatise was sent to the Kamakura Minister of the Right, that is, the third Minamoto shogun, Sanetomo 実朝, 1182–1219. Both Ieyoshi and Sanetomo studied poetry under Teika's tutelage, and either one would make a likely recipient for the treatise. Sanetomo especially, with his taste for poetry imitative of *Man'yōshū* 万葉集, ca. 759, Japan's most ancient anthology of native poetry,

<sup>5</sup> Inoue Muneo has pointed out (*Chūsei Kadanshi no Kenkyū, Nambokuchō Ki* 中世歌壇史の研究, 南北朝期, Meiji Shoin, 1965, pp. 478–79) that in several manuscripts of the so-called Nijō line of texts (discussed below), the first character of the copyist's signature is Gi 疑, whereas in others it is Gyō 凝. Gyōnen has been identified as a prelate of high rank at Tōdaiji in Nara, who died in 1321, sixteen years before the date of the colophon; while Ginen was an insignificant member of the Nijō poetic circle. Inoue believes that Ginen is correct and that in colophons bearing the name Gyōnen the writers confused the two characters, writing Gyōnen because the latter was such a well-known person.

<sup>6</sup> Ieyoshi was a member of the Kujō 九条 branch of the Fujiwara. He rose to the rank of Palace Minister (*naidaijin* 内大臣) and the

senior second court rank in 1240. His name is found among the participants in several poetry contests, and he was appointed one of the compilers of the eleventh imperial anthology, *Shokukokinshū* 続古今集 (completed 1265), but died before the selection was submitted to imperial inspection. He was also involved in the compilation of several unofficial collections.

According to Ton'a, Ieyoshi was an anti-Mikohidari 御子左 poet, that is, opposed to Shunzei and Teika and their faction, but at the same time he had an amiable disposition and remained on friendly terms with these poetic opponents. He was evidently on sufficiently good terms with Teika to ask him for his opinion, for his personal collection contains a set of poems selected by Teika as among Ieyoshi's best.

was an ideal subject for Teika's warnings and strictures against a premature fondness for the 'archaic style'.<sup>7</sup> He would also be a pupil to whom Teika might well address such a long letter as this, inasmuch as the two never met, Sanetomo spending all his life in and around Kamakura despite his eagerness to visit the imperial capital, and Teika remaining in Kyoto.

On the other hand, the oldest manuscript colophon, one signed by Teika's son Tameie, merely states that the treatise 'is said' to have been sent to 'a certain person' on the second day of the Seventh Month of Jōkyū 1 (1219). Not only does the colophon fail to identify the recipient, but if the date is correct, the treatise could not have been sent to Sanetomo, who had been assassinated several months previously in the First Month of Jōkyū 1. It is possible notwithstanding that either Tameie or Teika himself—for it was presumably he who told Tameie about the circumstances—may have misremembered the date. If that was indeed the case and the treatise was actually sent to Sanetomo, the circumstances of the latter's life and poetic development might suggest a date for the treatise a few years earlier than 1219, perhaps as early as 1213.<sup>8</sup> However, this is merely speculation, and in view of the relative lateness of both traditions and the lack of an identification on the oldest colophon, it can be said only that the recipient of *Maigetsushō* is unknown.

The two lines of texts of the treatise are called the Reizei and Nijō lines from the two main families of Teika's descendants in which they were handed down.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of Sanetomo and his poetry, see JCP, pp. 328–37. The obvious suitability of Sanetomo from the standpoint of one of his favorite poetic styles is hardly considered by Japanese scholars, perhaps because of the admiration for Sanetomo's *Man'yō*-style verse fostered by National Scholars of the Edo period and by the influential Meiji poet, Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規, 1867–1902. As a result, Sanetomo has long been a sacred cow, and adverse criticism of his poetry is unwelcome. Perusal of different versions of Ieyoshi's collected poems (in *Shikashū Taisei* 私歌集大成, Meiji Shoin, 1973–1976, 4, pp. 224–58) reveals a certain amount of *Man'yō* diction in his poetry as well, but nothing comparable to Sanetomo's extravagant *Man'yō* manner.

<sup>8</sup> Sanetomo's surviving poetry is found in three different versions of his collected poems, *Kinkai Wakashū* 金槐和歌集 ('Collection of the Kamakura Minister'). One version, based on a manuscript copied in part by Teika, bears the date Kenryaku 3 (1213), and is believed to contain verse written by Sanetomo up to the age of twenty-one; it contains 663 poems. The other two versions each contain 713 poems. Additions from other sources bring the total

canon to 758 poems. Many of Sanetomo's verses are only slight reworkings of older poems and give every evidence of having been written with the aid of one or more of the numerous handbooks classifying exemplary poems under various topical and other headings. Many of them are very much in the style of the period of *Shinkokinshū*. His poems in the *Man'yō* style actually make up a relatively small percentage of the whole, contrary to the popular misconception that he wrote only in this style.

Many of his poems that are most admired today date from about 1209 on, that is, the latter part of the period presumably covered by his collection. (Few of the poems are dated, which makes a general chronology hypothetical at best.) For the last five years or so of his life, Sanetomo is thought to have written little. Manipulated by his mother and grandfather and surrounded by enemies, he is believed to have sunk into inactivity, alcoholism, and despair. One cannot help doubting whether he would have been still sending monthly sets of poems to Teika during this period.

On Sanetomo's poetry, see Kojima Yoshio 小島吉雄, ed., *Kinkai Wakashū* 金槐和歌集 (NKBT 20), Iwanami, 1961, pp. 303–11.

A third group of texts appears to be a mixture of the Reizei and Nijo traditions rather than an independent line in its own right.<sup>9</sup> Many manuscript copies of the treatise survive from the Muromachi and Edo periods, but there is none earlier than Muromachi and no extant holograph. The Reizei texts are generally considered superior, and various manuscripts of this line have been used for the standard modern printed editions. Besides the colophon by Tameie mentioned above, the Reizei texts have one of two versions of a colophon by Tameie's grandson, Reizei Tamehide 冷泉為秀, d. 1372, stating that he has made a careful copy of the manuscript inherited from his forefathers and testifying to the absolute reliability of the text. It is inferred from these colophons that a copy of the holograph was made at some point by Tameie for the instruction of his favorite son, Reizei Tamesuke 冷泉為相, 1263–1328, and passed on by him to his own son Tamehide. Japanese scholars generally regard these colophons as evidence that *Maigetsushō* was known at least to Teika's son Tameie, whatever the fate of Teika's original text.

Some but not all manuscripts of the Nijō line have the Tameie colophon, with some of these identifying the 'certain person' recipient as the Kinugasa Palace Minister. Other manuscripts have in addition a colophon ostensibly by Tameie's eldest son Tameuji 為氏, 1222–1286, dated 1253 and stating that he has made a copy of the text in the handwriting of his 'late father'. Inasmuch as Tameie was alive and well in 1253 (he died in 1275), this colophon is generally considered a forgery. In addition, some Nijō manuscripts bear the aforementioned colophon by the priest Ginen (or Gyōnen in a number of texts) dated 1337 and stating that the treatise was sent to the Kinugasa Palace Minister. Yet other manuscripts lack the Tameie and 'Tameuji' colophons and bear only the Ginen colophon and one or more others added by later copyists.

Two conclusions drawn from this rather confused situation are that Teika's treatise was first passed down in the Reizei family through Tameie's copy, and that the Nijō family succeeded in obtaining a copy for themselves, perhaps by nefarious means, only rather late in the game. In making their own copy they would have reproduced Tameie's colophon, and one of their number—Tamezane 為実, 1255–1333, a younger son of Tameuji and rather peripheral member of the Nijō faction, is the chief suspect—forged the Tameuji colophon in order to demonstrate that the treatise had all along been among the Nijō poetic documents. Until this time the Nijō actually had not possessed *Maigetsushō*. Given these circumstances, it is rather to be expected that no mention of the treatise is found before the Nijō poet Ton'a referred to it in his *Seiashō*.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Takanashi Motoko 高梨素子, '*Maigetsushō no Denrai Kō* 毎月抄の伝来考', in *Kokubungaku Kenkyū* 国文学研究, 61 (February 1977), pp. 46–60. My description is based primarily on Inoue, *Chūsei Kadanshi*,

and Fukuda Hideichi 福田秀一, *Chūsei Wakashi no Kenkyū* 中世和歌史の研究, Kadokawa, 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Fukuda, *Chūsei Wakashi*, pp. 584–85.

Assuming the Nijō line of texts to derive ultimately from a copy of the Reizei manuscript, it is not surprising that the differences between the two lines are negligible for the most part, with the exception of two passages found in the Nijō texts but not in those of the Reizei line. These passages are regarded as later interpolations or revisions by copyists and need not be gone into here. For my translation I have used the Reizei-line text edited by Fujihira Haruo 藤平春男,<sup>11</sup> and have called attention in footnotes to the most important discrepancies between this and the Nijō texts.

The vexing question remains whether *Maigetsushō* is a genuine treatise by Teika or a forgery, or partly a forgery, as some scholars maintain. It must be said at the outset that there is no conclusive answer to this question, although certain arguments put forward by the proponents of the forgery theory have been rather convincingly rebutted by Inoue Muneo 井上宗雄, Fukuda Hideichi 福田秀一, and others.<sup>12</sup> Specifically, a number of passages, lines, or phrases in *Maigetsushō* are similar to passages in later writings, notably Tameie's own treatise commonly known as *Eiga no Ittei* 詠歌一体 ('The Primary Style of Poetic Composition'), ca. 1274; *Yakumo Mishō* 八雲御抄 ('Imperial Notes on the Art of the Eightfold Clouds') written by Emperor Juntoku 順徳, 1197–1242; and such an obvious later forgery as *Gukenshō* 愚見抄 ('Notes on My Humble Opinions').<sup>13</sup> The proponents of the forgery theory generally regard these similarities as evidence that *Maigetsushō* borrowed from these works, but there is no convincing basis for such an argument, and the reverse—namely, that these later works borrowed from *Maigetsushō*—is both more logical and more plausible. Thus, it makes better sense to assume that Tameie carefully studied his father's draft copy of *Maigetsushō* (the final, fair copy would of course have been sent to the recipient) and borrowed from it for his *Eiga no Ittei*, intended for the instruction of his son Tamesuke.

A more troublesome problem concerns a passage near the end of the treatise, where Teika, having just politely denied any claim to critical judgment, goes on to say,

Nevertheless, I need not be so diffident on that account. For some time ago, during the Genkyū era [1204–1206], when I made a retreat at Sumiyoshi, I had a wonderful dream inspired by the God, in which I was told, 'For you the moon is

<sup>11</sup> In Hashimoto Fumio 橋本不美男 *et al.*, ed., *Karonshū* 歌論集 (NKBZ 50), Shōgakusan, 1975, pp. 511–30. Fujihira's basic text is an early Edo copy in the Matsudaira Library of the Shimabara Civic Center.

<sup>12</sup> Inoue, *Chūsei Kadanshi*, pp. 476–80; Fukuda, *Chūsei Wakashi*, pp. 581–88. My summation of the arguments for and against the forgery theory is based upon these sources, and also upon Fukuda Hideichi, 'Teika Karonsho no Shingi no Mondai' 定家歌論書の真偽の問題, in *Nihon Bungaku no Sōten* 日本文学の争

点, Meiji Shoin, 1969, 3, pp. 167–202.

<sup>13</sup> *Gukenshō* is perhaps the oldest of the notorious Cormorant and Heron (*U* 鶺鴒 and *Sagi* 鷺), or Rabbit (*U* + *Sagi* = *Usagi* 兎, Rabbit) complex of treatises forged by members of both Nijō and Reizei poetic factions and attributed to Teika. It is of unknown date and authorship, but is believed to have emanated from the Reizei side. For an account of the origin of the Cormorant and Heron treatises, see JCP, pp. 349–51.

radiant.' Because of this I wrote my 'Record of the Full Moon', so as to contribute to the poetic traditions of my house—although it was, I realize, a far greater task than I was worthy to perform.

This passage presents several difficulties. First, it is Teika's diary, not the compendium of poetic lore suggested by this passage, that has been known for centuries as *Meigetsuki* 明月記, or 'Record of the Full Moon'.<sup>14</sup> Again, no poetic treatise called *Meigetsuki* survives at the present day, or can be proved to have existed in Teika's time or later, although some scholars believe that such a work did originally exist and that it may have been cannibalized by the writers of the group of forgeries attributed to him. At the same time, the entries in Teika's diary for the Genkyū era make no mention of a retreat and auspicious dream at Sumiyoshi, although if *Maigetsushō* was indeed written in or around 1219, some fifteen years later than the Genkyū era, Teika might conceivably have mis-remembered the date, and the retreat have been originally recorded in a portion of his diary that is no longer extant. (The surviving *Meigetsuki* has numerous gaps and is believed to constitute only about a third of the original work.)

Another and more likely explanation is that the passage in *Maigetsushō* is a later interpolation. The story does indeed have an apocryphal sound, and gives the impression of having been dragged in for no good reason. In any event, this one passage is not sufficient to brand the entire work a forgery. On the contrary, the instructions, principles, and ideals set forth in the treatise are entirely consistent with what is known of Teika's views from other sources, and this fact constitutes the strongest internal evidence for believing the treatise essentially genuine.

*Maigetsushō* begins with a short introductory section in which Teika politely praises his pupil's latest efforts and says that he can no longer refuse to pass on 'those few fragments of poetic instruction' imparted to him by his father, Shunzei, or Toshinari, 俊成, 1114–1204.<sup>15</sup> It soon becomes clear, however, that this long letter is addressed to a rather headstrong pupil—whether Ieyoshi,

<sup>14</sup> According to Fukuda, *Chūsei Wakashi*, p. 537, quoting Nijō Yoshimoto 二条良基, 1320–1388, important waka and *renga* poet and statesman, Teika's diary was evidently called *Meigetsuki* in the Reizei family from the time of Tamehide, that is, the fourteenth century. The diary was referred to by Tameie as 'the diary of His Lordship, the late Middle Counsellor Lay Priest' (*ko chūnagon nyūdō-dono nikki* 故中納言入道殿日記), and by Tamesuke as 'the august diary of the Middle Counsellor Lay Priest' (*chūnagon nyūdō gyōki* 中納言入道御記). It was also known by other names. See Ishida Yoshisada 石田吉貞, *Fujiwara Teika no Kenkyū* 藤原定家の研究, Bungadō, 1957, pp. 458–60.

<sup>15</sup> Although any pupil of high rank might have kept pestering Teika to impart the 'secrets of the Art', the situation particularly fits Sanetomo. In 1209 Teika had sent Sanetomo his treatise and set of exemplary poems, *Kindai Shūka*, because, according to the Kamakura chronicle, *Azuma Kagami* 吾妻鏡, 'he had been asked by His Excellency for private instruction in the Six Principles and the Poetic Styles' (*Azuma Kagami*, in Kuroita Katsumi 黒板勝美, ed., *Kokushi Taikei* 国史大系, rev. ed., Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1932, 32, p. 646). Inasmuch as the prefatory essay to *Kindai Shūka* is very brief, one can imagine Sanetomo's desire for more detail.



Sanetomo, or someone else—whom Teika feels to be much in need of a restraining hand. This situation accounts for the negative tone of parts of the work, with their warnings against premature indulgence in the ‘archaic style’, against following the wrong models and going off on a wrong tangent. And of course Teika repeatedly stresses the necessity for unrelenting discipline and practice.

In spite of Teika’s claim that he is merely passing on his father’s instructions, *Maigetsushō* contains classic statements of his original poetic ideals and opinions not to be found in Shunzei’s writings or elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> First of these is his differentiation of ten styles of poetry, which has made this particular treatise famous.<sup>17</sup> Teika states that he has written to his pupil previously about the ten styles, and so quite naturally he merely lists them without explanation or illustration. At the same time, the salient characteristics of most of the styles can be deduced from their descriptive names and the use of similar terms in other poetic writings. It is possible that Teika had previously sent the pupil a set of exemplary poems illustrating the individual styles.<sup>18</sup> In any case, he enjoins him to master first the ‘fundamental styles’, that is, the styles that Teika considers to represent the great central tradition of classical poetry, and then to proceed to the other styles. The ‘demon-quelling style’, a style marked by strong or even vulgar diction such as is found in some of the poems of *Man’yōshū*, is to be particularly avoided until the other styles have been mastered and the pupil has consolidated his own individual manner—not because the ‘demon-quelling style’ is superior to the others, but because it is

<sup>16</sup> During his long and productive life, Shunzei became the ‘grand old man’ of Japanese poetry and undisputed doyen of the Art in the late twelfth century. Teika inherited Shunzei’s eminent position and his poetic standards and ideals, but made important new contributions of his own. On Shunzei as poet and critic, see JCP, Chapter 6.

<sup>17</sup> Teika may very likely have derived his conception of ten styles of poetry from a late tenth- or early eleventh-century treatise attributed, probably spuriously, to the poet Mibu no Tadamine 壬生忠岑, fl. ca. 900–920, and known variously as *Wakatei Jisshu* 和歌体十種 (‘Ten Varieties of Japanese Poetic Style’) and *Tadamine Jittei* 忠岑十体 (‘Tadamine’s Ten Styles’). In this work, four or five examples, followed by a brief comment, are given for each of ten poetic styles. None of the styles bears a name identical with Teika’s, although several are clearly similar to certain of his. See Kyūsojin Hitaku 久曾神昇, ed., *Nihon Kagaku Taikē* 日本歌学大系 [NKT], rev. ed., Kazama, 1957–, 1, pp. 45–49.

<sup>18</sup> Such a set of exemplary poems grouped under the ten rubrics is known today as *Teika Jittei* 定家十体 (‘Teika’s Ten Styles’). A great many manuscript versions of this work exist, with varying numbers of poems; the text printed in NKT, 4, pp. 362–79, has 286 poems. In all versions the poems are merely grouped under the names of the styles without comment. Whether or not this work was compiled by Teika himself, and whether or not the original text was more or less the same as those surviving today (the oldest extant manuscript dates from the early Edo period), are unanswered questions. Some believe the work a forgery, but majority opinion holds that in one form or another it was originally compiled by Teika. All of the poems are found in the first eight imperial anthologies, with some eighty percent in *Shinkokinshū*. A notation in Emperor Juntoku’s collected poems indicates that the original text existed prior to 1213. See *Waka Bungaku Daijiten* 和歌文学大辞典, Meiji Shoin, 1962, p. 725: ‘*Teika Jittei*’.

more difficult, being at odds with the classical poetic values of beauty, elegance, and grace.<sup>19</sup>

From the ten styles, Teika moves on to a discussion of his famous ideal of 'conviction of feeling', or *ushin* 有心, the dominant poetic ideal of his middle and late years. As he is careful to point out, he uses the same term *ushin* in two senses: in the narrow sense of 'deep feeling', as a single one of the ten styles; and in the broad sense of a 'conviction of feeling', a quality that must be possessed by every good poem. This insistence upon emotional or lyrical conviction applies not only to the effect of the poem upon the reader, but to the poet's attitude toward poetry: he must approach the art with the utmost seriousness and concentration. There is little comfort in such a stern prescription for the casual dilettante, such as Teika's royal patron Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽, 1180–1239,<sup>20</sup> or Sanetomo himself much of the time. The passage is, indeed, a classic statement of Teika's stubborn and uncompromising demand for the highest standard of artistic integrity.

Following a brief discussion of poetic diction and the traditional dichotomy of *hana* 花, or 'blossoms' (language, materials, and form), and *mi* 実, or 'fruit' (thought, feeling, and poetic effect),<sup>21</sup> Teika proceeds to another crucial section of the treatise, his definition of a superior poem. While insisting that such matters can be understood only by intuition and experience and cannot be taught by one person to another, he nevertheless provides a moving and sensitive description of a truly fine poem, a poem that cannot, he says, be produced by conscious effort but may appear only spontaneously as a result of constant discipline and practice. Again, in this complex prescription for poetic

<sup>19</sup> Of the twelve examples of the demon-quelling style (*onihishigitei* or *kiratsu no tei* 鬼拉体) in *Teika Jittei* (text in NKT, 4, pp. 362–79), the following version of a poem in *Man'yōshū* is the most 'violent' (*Man'yōshū*, 4:503; also, *Shinkokinshū*, 10:911):

*Kamikaze ya / Ise no hamaogi / Orishikite / Tabine ya suran / Araki hamabe ni.*

Breaking off the reeds / That grow along the beach at Ise / Of the Divine Wind, / Does he spread them for his traveler's bed / There on the rough sea strand?

The 'demon-quelling' elements in the poem are presumably the pillow word 'of the Divine Wind' (*Kamikaze ya*), and the imagery of breaking coarse reeds and the rough shore (see also JCP, pp. 247–48). Hardly 'demon-quelling' to our modern tastes, but if such a tame example was considered extreme by Teika and his successors, it can be imagined what they must have thought of this poem by Sanetomo, one of his most admired by modern Japanese: 'On seeing the waves break upon the rough

shore', in *Kinkaishū* (NKT, 29, p. 424):

*Ōumi no / Iso mo todomo ni / Yosuru nami / Warete kudakete / Sakete chiru ka mo.*

From the vast sea, / The waves encroach in thunder / Upon the quaking shore— / Breaking, smashing, riving, / Falling in great sheets of spray.

<sup>20</sup> On Go-Toba's attitude toward poetry and his disagreements with Teika on that score, see Brower, 'Ex-Emperor Go-Toba's Secret Teachings: *Go-Toba no In Gokuden*', in *HJAS* 32 (1972), pp. 5–70, esp. pp. 28–29.

<sup>21</sup> The blossoms-fruit dichotomy appears in the Chinese preface to the first imperial anthology, *Kokinshū* 古今集, 905:

'The times degenerated into frivolity, and men came to prize luxury and license, so that empty words rose up like clouds and artificial expressions gushed forth in torrents. The fruit all fell to the ground and only the blossoms flourished.' Ozawa Masao 小沢正夫, ed., *Kokinshū*, in *NKBZ*, 7, p. 416.

excellence, Teika reveals his high idealistic standard of artistic accomplishment.

Numerous other points in the treatise are of great intrinsic and historical importance, and they provide valuable insights into the poetic practices and tastes of the Age of *Shinkokinshū*. Thus, the avoidance of obscurity and preciosity; the classic prescription for the technique of *honkadori* 本歌取り (allusive variation, or ‘using a foundation poem’); the correct treatment of conventional poetic topics; the avoidance of repeated use of the same expressions and of unnatural mannerisms; allusions to Chinese poetry and the therapeutic value of Chinese verse—these and other points were all matters of vital concern to the poets of Teika’s day and offer the modern reader unique perceptions of how the age viewed what it valued as the highest of the arts.

*Maigetsushō*

by FUJIWARA TEIKA

I have done myself the honor of carefully studying your Lordship's monthly set of one hundred poems. The verses you have sent this time are indeed admirable—so much so that I feel I can no longer refuse the gracious request that you have repeatedly made to my unworthy self over these last years, and have written down those few fragments of poetic instruction that my late father<sup>22</sup> imparted to me. Assuredly I will be a laughing stock for future generations, but I shall persevere nonetheless, because, as befits the heir to such an illustrious line, you have written an exceptionally large number of fine poems of late, and I am deeply gratified by your progress and achievement.

Now then, as I have written to you numerous times, you should peruse at leisure the several imperial anthologies from *Man'yōshū* down to the present, and reach an understanding of the ways in which the various styles of poetry have changed during the course of time.<sup>23</sup> When you do this, however, it does not mean that you should necessarily accept every last poem as a model simply because it is in an imperial anthology, for rise and decline can be observed in poetry, depending upon the merits of the individual poets and the vicissitudes

<sup>22</sup> *Senjin* 先人, literally, 'former person', but Shunzei is clearly meant.

<sup>23</sup> *Man'yōshū* was thought in Heian and Kamakura times to have been one of the *chokusenshū* 勅撰集, imperial anthologies commissioned by an emperor or ex-emperor, although there is no evidence for such an idea. The existing imperial anthologies when Teika wrote *Maigetsushō* were the first eight, the so-called *hachidaishū* 八代集, or anthologies of eight eras:

*Kokinshū* 905.

*Gosenshū* 後撰集, ca. 951.

*Shūishū* 拾遺集, ca. 1006.

*Goshūishū* 後拾遺集, 1086.

*Kin'yōshū* 金葉集, 1126.

*Shikashū* 詞花集, ca. 1154.

*Senzaishū* 千載集, 1188.

*Shinkokinshū*, ca. 1205.

In his important treatise, *Korai Fūteishō* 古来風体抄 ('Notes on Poetic Style Through the

Ages'), written in 1197 at the request of Princess Shikishi 式子, d. 1201, Shunzei had said:

'I shall write down a few odds and ends to show how both the style and the diction of poetry have changed with the passage of time, from *Man'yōshū* in ancient times through *Kokin*, *Gosen*, and *Shūi* in middle antiquity, to *Goshūi* and later collections in the recent past.' Matsuno Yōichi 松野陽一, ed., *Korai Fūteishō*, in *Karonshū* 歌論集, Miyai, 1971, 1, p. 121.

Shunzei's treatise was the first to establish specific historical periods in poetic development ('ancient times', 'middle antiquity', and 'the recent past'), and in it he discussed a number of representative poems from *Man'yōshū* and each of the imperial anthologies. Teika would have been familiar with *Korai Fūteishō* and perhaps it was known to his pupil as well.

of the times. As for *Man'yōshū*, it represents a very ancient age, when the hearts of men were unsophisticated, so that even if we try to emulate it, we cannot possibly succeed in this present generation.<sup>24</sup> It is especially important for a novice that he not permit himself to become enamored of the archaic style. To be sure, after many years of practice, when a person's individual poetic manner has become established—then, I feel, it is very bad indeed for a poet to be ignorant of the styles of *Man'yōshū*.

But even though a person might compose in these styles after much previous training, caution would still be necessary, for there are words and effects that should not be reproduced under any circumstances. What I mean by these are words that are too close to the common and vulgar usage, or effects that are rough and frightening. There is no need to mention particular examples at this point; you may gather my meaning from what I have written below. Because your most recent set of one hundred poems contains a great many poems in the archaic style, I fear that you may be discouraged by what I say. Nevertheless, you should restrain yourself for a little while longer from composing in this style—at least for another year or two, until you are able to compose without difficulty in the fundamental styles.

Those styles I regard as fundamental are the following four of the ten styles that I have designated previously: the style of mystery and depth,<sup>25</sup> the style of appropriate statement,<sup>26</sup> the style of elegant beauty,<sup>27</sup> and the style of deep feel-

<sup>24</sup> Shunzei: 'The poetry of early times displays no deliberate effort to ornament the style or polish the language, but in that ancient age men's hearts were simple, and even though they merely uttered their verses just as the words happened to occur to them, they have a depth of feeling and a lofty effect.' Matsuno, *Korai Fūteishō*, p. 130.

<sup>25</sup> *Yūgentei* 幽玄体. This style is associated particularly with Shunzei, who appreciated and advocated the mode of descriptive symbolism and the qualities of depth, resonance, and overtones that it epitomizes. Teika inherited this ideal, and used the term *yūgen* in essentially the same way as did his father. In the 'version sent away' (*kensōbon* 遣送本, that is, the version sent to Sanetomo in 1209) of *Kindai Shūka*, Teika comments on two poems by Minamoto Toshiyori 源俊頼, 1055–1129: 'The poems are in the style of mystery and depth, their imagery evoking an effect of ineffable loneliness.' The two poems are as follows (*Kin'yōshū*, 3:254 and *Shinkokinshū*, 5:533, respectively):

*Uzura naku / Mano no irie no / Hamakaze ni / Obananami yoru / Aki no yūgure.*

The wind comes blowing / From the shore of the Cove of Mano / Where quail raise their cries, / Making waves of tassled plume grass / Ripple in the autumn dusk.

*Furusato wa / Chiru momijiba ni / Uzumorete / Noki no shinobu ni / Akikaze zo fuku.*

My former home / Lies buried under crimson leaves / Fallen in the garden, / And in the sedge grass on the eaves, / The melancholy autumn wind.

See Fujihira Haruo, ed., *Kindai Shūka*, in *Karonshū* (NKBZ 50), p. 436. On Shunzei and the style of mystery and depth, see JCP, Chapter 6, *passim*.

It should perhaps be noted that in various other manuscript copies of *Maigetsushō* of the Reizei line, including the basic text used by Hisamatsu Sen'ichi 久松潜一 for his annotated edition in NKBT, 65, pp. 126–39, the term used for all but two of the ten styles is *yō* 様 rather than *tei*, the exceptions being the demon-quelling style and the style of deep feeling (see below). The two terms are essentially synonymous.

<sup>26</sup> *Koto shikarubeki tei* 事可然体. Among

ing.<sup>28</sup> Even among these styles are occasionally to be found poems that have archaic elements, but the general effect is such that their archaic style is not displeasing. After you have developed the ability to compose freely in these gentle and amiable styles, such others as the lofty style,<sup>29</sup> the style of visual description,<sup>30</sup> the style of clever treatment,<sup>31</sup> the style of novel treatment,<sup>32</sup>

the twenty-eight examples of this style in *Teika Jittei* is the following poem by Shunzei (*Senzaishū*, 16:988):

*Sumiwabite / Mi o kakusubeki / Yamazato ni / Amari kuma naki / Yowa no tsuki kana.*

Weary of the world, / I had thought to hide myself away / In this mountain village, / But it reaches every corner of the night, / The too-bright radiance of the moon.

<sup>27</sup> *Uruwashiki tei* 麗体, a style characterized by harmony, balance, and beauty of cadence. Among the twenty-four examples given in *Teika Jittei* are Toshiyori's poem on the Cove of Mano (quoted in n. 25, above), and also the following famous poem traditionally attributed to the great *Man'yō* poet of the late seventh century, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麿 (*Kokinshū*, 9:409):

*Honobono to / Akashi no ura no / Asagiri ni / Shimagakureyuku / Fune o shi zo omou.*

Dimly, dimly, / In the morning mist that lies / Over Akashi Bay, / My longings follow with the ship / That vanishes behind the distant isles.

<sup>28</sup> *Ushintei* 有心体. In the narrow sense of one of the ten styles, it is generally interpreted as a highly subjective style in which the speaker's feelings pervade the imagery and rhetoric of the poem. As Teika points out a little later on, the style of deep feeling is especially appropriate to poems on Love or Expressing a Grievance. Among the forty-one rather heterogeneous examples of *ushintei* given in *Teika Jittei* is the following love poem by Princess Shikishi (*Shinkokinshū*, 9:1034):

*Tama no o yo / Taenaba taene / Nagaraeba / Shinoburu koto no / Yowari mo zo suru.*

O cord of life, / Threading through the jewel of my soul, / If you would break, break now: / I shall weaken if this life continues, / Unable to bear such misery.

<sup>29</sup> *Taketakaki tei* 長高体, a style of grandeur and elevation. One of the twenty-six examples in *Teika Jittei* is this poem by Fujiwara (Go-Kyōgoku) Yoshitsune 藤原(後京極)良経, 1169–1206, composed on 'The Moon at Dawn' (*Shinkokinshū*, 16:1545):

*Ama no to o / Oshiakegata no / Kumoma yori / Kamiyo no tsuki no / Kage zo nokoreru.*

As the coming dawn / Pushes open the Gate of Heaven, / From behind the clouds / Still streams the splendor of a moon / Radiant since the Age of the Gods.

<sup>30</sup> *Miru tei* 見体, a rather bland style emphasizing visual description and imagery. It was this style, used to dilute the traditional subjective mannerisms of the 'Fujiwara style' (see JCP, pp. 220–23), that was particularly favored by Tameie and the Nijō line of Teika's descendants. Among the twelve examples in *Teika Jittei* is the following poem by Minamoto Tsunenobu 源経信, 1016–1097, on 'Young Rice Shoots in Mountain Fields' (*Shinkokinshū*, 3:225):

*Sanae toru / Yamada no kakehi / Morinikeri / Hiku shimenawa ni / Tsuyu zo koboruru.*

The water pipe / Leading into the mountain fields / Must be leaking, / For moisture drips from the sacred ropes / Around the beds of seedling rice.

<sup>31</sup> *Omoshiroki tei* 面白体, a witty or ingenious treatment of a conventional topic. Thirty-one examples are given in *Teika Jittei*, including the following poem 'On Snow' (*Shinkokinshū*, 6:679) by Archbishop Jien 慈円, 1155–1225:

*Niwa no yukini / Waga ato tsukete / Idetsuru o / Towarenikeri to / Hito ya miruran.*

Though it was only I / Who came out into the garden, / Leaving footprints in the snow, / Will people think some visitor / Has brought comfort to my loneliness?

<sup>32</sup> *Hitofushi aru tei* 有一節体, an unusual or original poetic conception. Among the twenty-six examples in *Teika Jittei* is the following (*Shinkokinshū*, 11:1060) by Fujiwara Motozane 藤原元真, fl. ca. 950:

*Namidagawa / Mi mo uku bakari / Nagaruredo / Kienu wa hito no / Omoi narikeri.*

My River of Tears / Bids fair to float my body off / Upon its current, / But it still cannot put out the fire / That you have kindled in my breast.

and the style of exquisite detail<sup>33</sup> are quite easy to learn. The demon-quelling style<sup>34</sup> is the one that you will find most difficult to master, but even so, I see no reason why you should not be able to compose in it after you have attained the necessary proficiency.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, it is a style in which you must not attempt to compose while you are a novice. Japanese poetry is first and foremost an art peculiar to the Land of Yamato,<sup>36</sup> which is why, perhaps, we find in the documents written in such careful detail by the great poets of old that it must be composed with gentleness and sensibility.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, no matter how fearful a thing may be of itself, when it is put into a poem it is made to sound graceful and elegant. That being the case, what is to be gained by treating such things as cherry blossoms and the moon, which are by nature gentle, as if they were frightening?

Now among these ten styles there is not one in which the true nature of poetry may be felt more wholly to reside than the style of deep feeling. It is extremely difficult to achieve, for it cannot by any means be put together in a facile manner by making use of one technique or another. Only when a person has completely cleared his mind and thoroughly immersed himself in the unique realm of this style is it possible to compose in it, and even then success is rare. It is for this reason, no doubt, that fine poetry has been said to be possible only when every poem is suffused with deep feeling. On the other hand, if one goes through excessive contortions in the effort to instill deep feeling into it, one's poem will be over-elaborate and contrived, and such ill-constructed, incomprehensible verses are even more ugly and distasteful than those which lack feeling altogether. The borderline between success

<sup>33</sup> *Komayaka naru tei* 濃体, a style of complex imagery and rhetoric. The following poem (*Kokinshū*, 4:193) by Ōe no Chisato 大江千里, fl. ca. 890–905, is one of the twenty-nine examples in *Teika Jittei*:

*Tsuki mireba / Chiji ni mono koso / Kanashikere / Waga mi hitotsu no / Aki ni wa aranedo.*

A thousand things / Overcome me with their sadness / As I gaze upon the moon, / Although the autumn was not meant / To be felt by me alone.

<sup>34</sup> See n. 19, above.

<sup>35</sup> Nijō texts have the following sentence here: 'By stating things in this way, I do not at all mean to suggest that the demon-quelling style is superior to all the others.' See Hisamatsu, ed., *Maigetsushō*, p. 127, lines 12–13.

<sup>36</sup> *Wakoku no fū* 和国の風. 'Wakoku' was the common term for Japan in China from the Han dynasty (220 B.C.–A.D. 220) on. Here Teika is stressing the special characteristics of

Japanese verse in contradistinction to the Chinese, a contrast implicit in the word *waka* 和歌, 'Yamato poetry', as distinguished from *kanshi* 漢詩, 'Chinese verse'. It may also be noted that the character 和 means 'peace', 'harmony', and Teika is playing on that meaning as well.

<sup>37</sup> No specific documentary source for this statement has been identified by the commentators, although similar characterizations of *waka* are found. Thus, in Shunzei's *Korai Fūteishō*: 'A poem, whether read or recited aloud, should somehow convey a feeling of elegance and lyrical sensibility to the hearer.' Matsuno, *Korai Fūteishō*, p. 121, lines 2–3.

Also, in the Japanese preface to *Kokinshū*: 'It is poetry that, without exertion, moves heaven and earth, stirs the feelings of gods and spirits invisible to the eye, softens the relations between men and women, calms the hearts of fierce warriors.' Ozawa, *Kokinshū*, p. 49.

and failure is of supreme importance and must constantly be given the most careful thought.

Those who are seriously interested in this Art of Poetry must never even for a moment compose in a casual manner without concentrating their minds. To produce an ill-conceived poem not only becomes a source of misery by inviting the scorn of others, but can also cause a person to grow tired of poetry and may even lead to the decline of the Art itself. Thus I have heard of a man who, having brought criticism upon himself, pined away and died of chagrin.<sup>38</sup> Or again, it would appear that someone else, having had a fine poem expropriated by another person, after death appeared to the malefactor in a dream, weeping and lamenting and demanding the return of his poem,<sup>39</sup> with the result that it was expunged from an imperial anthology. Instances of this kind are not limited to the ones I have mentioned, and I find them pitiful indeed. Consequently, one must take pains, both when the poetic topics are announced in advance and when they are given out at the time of the gathering,<sup>40</sup> to compose one's poems with extreme care, reciting them over and over aloud to oneself.<sup>41</sup> Carelessness will invariably lead to criticism later on. And one must constantly have one's mind fixed upon poems that are in the style of deep feeling.

Notwithstanding all this, at times you will find it impossible to compose in this style. When you feel heavy and dispirited, or when your mind is in turmoil, no amount of effort will succeed in producing a poem in the style of deep feeling. If you persist in trying to compose one under such conditions, your natural talent will fail you and the result will be an ill-conceived poem. At such times you should compose poems that deal with the beauties of nature—poems whose style and phrasing are buoyant and easy, and whose general effect, though not conveying any profound emotion, is somehow pleasing to the ear. This advice should be especially borne in mind on occasions when the topics are given out at the time of the gathering, for even such verses as these will,

<sup>38</sup> Specifically, perhaps, Fujiwara Nagatō 藤原長能, fl. ca. 980–1000. Several of the old poetic handbooks tell of how, having had one of his poems criticized by the poetic authority of the day, Fujiwara Kintō 藤原公任, 966–1041, Nagatō pined away and died. Fujiwara, *Maigetsushō*, p. 516, n. 6.

<sup>39</sup> No specific reference has been identified, although Emperor Juntoku 順徳 says in his treatise *Yakumo Mishō* 八雲御抄 that Priest Sosei 素性, fl. ca. 860–900, had such an attachment to poetry (contrary to Buddhist injunctions against human attachments of any kind) that after his death his unquiet spirit appeared to people in their dreams. Fujiwara, *Maigetsushō*, p. 516, n. 6.

<sup>40</sup> In Teika's day, practically all formal poetry was written on conventional poetic topics, or *dai* 題. For one of the frequent poetry parties or gatherings at court or in the mansions of the nobility, the topics might sometimes be announced days, weeks, or even months in advance, depending upon the seriousness and formality of the occasion; or they might be announced or drawn by lot after the group had assembled.

<sup>41</sup> Inasmuch as poems composed at group sessions were 'published' by being read before the assembled participants, it was essential to make sure, by reciting one's poem over to oneself, that it would sound well when read aloud.



when you have composed four or five, or as many as ten of them, disperse your heavy spirits and attune your sensibilities, so that you can compose in the more fundamental styles. On the other hand, when you are assigned such topics as ‘Love’ or ‘Expressing a Grievance’,<sup>42</sup> I think you should make every effort to compose exclusively in the style of deep feeling. It might even be said that such poems must be in this style in order to be successful.

Now this style of deep feeling should extend over the other nine styles because the style of mystery and depth must carry a conviction of feeling, so must the lofty style, and so must all of the others. It is indeed true that whatever style it may be in, a poem that lacks emotional conviction is bad. Of the ten styles I have named above, the one I have designated the style of deep feeling is different from what I mean by the emotional conviction of the other styles. Rather, I have chosen the term to designate those poems written in the attempt to produce the single effect of deep feeling. Whatever the style may be, however, it must convey a conviction of feeling.

Another crucial matter in poetry is the choice of diction, for in language there are strong words and weak, thick ones and thin.<sup>43</sup> It is extremely important in composing your poems that you distinguish carefully among your words and be consistent, following strong words with strong ones, putting weak words together with weak, mulling your composition over again and again so that it is neither too thick nor too thin, but smooth and flowing and not displeasing to the ear. In my view, there are no words that are intrinsically good or bad. Rather, it is from the effect of words when put together that such distinctions arise in poetic diction. For example, if you were to follow words of mystery and depth with demon-quelling words, the effect would be extremely ugly and unpleasant. For this reason my late father left the injunction, ‘First the poetic conception, then choose your diction accordingly.’<sup>44</sup> Or as another person seems to have put it, ‘The poems of antiquity all possess fruit but neglect the blossoms, whereas the poems of recent times are concerned exclusively with the blossoms and pay no attention at all to the fruit.’<sup>45</sup> I cannot but heartily agree. Besides, a similar view would seem to be expressed in the

<sup>42</sup> *Jukkai* 述懷. The topic was often treated in terms of a lament by the speaker on his failure to gain recognition or advancement at court, but the poem might also be a complaint about old age, failure to obtain religious enlightenment, and the like. The topic was very popular from the mid-twelfth century on.

<sup>43</sup> *Kyōjaku daishō* 強弱大小. ‘Strong’ or ‘thick’ words presumably conveyed a vivid image or meaning but lacked a certain delicacy and elegance, whereas ‘weak’ or ‘thin’ words had the opposite effect.

<sup>44</sup> No statement of this exact kind has been

found in Shunzei’s surviving writings or decisions recorded at poetry contents.

<sup>45</sup> On ‘fruit’ and ‘blossoms’, see below. The source of this remark has not been identified, although there is a similar statement in Sugawara Michizane’s 菅原道真, 845–903, preface to *Shinsen Man’yōshū* 新撰万葉集, a private anthology first completed in 893. Teika’s contemporary, the poet-priest Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明, 1155–1216, has also been suggested as the source. Fujihira, *Maigetsushō*, p. 518, n. 5.

preface to *Kokinshū*.<sup>46</sup> Concerning this matter I shall discuss below a few of my thoughts and notions, so that you may be able to understand my meaning.

What I mean by 'fruit' is the thought or feeling, and what I mean by 'blossoms' is the language. Nevertheless, simply because the language of ancient poetry sounds strong, you should not necessarily jump to the conclusion that it possesses fruit, for even among the poems of the ancients, those lacking feeling must be said to be without fruit, while even in the present day, people sometimes compose poems that are harmonious and well conceived, and may be said to possess fruit. Now in instructing you to put the poetic conception first, I may seem to be saying to give second place to the language; whereas were I to say that you should concern yourself above all with the language, I might seem to imply that the conception does not matter. But the truth is that I would define a good poem as one in which the thought and the language are found in balance together. Indeed, I feel that the conception and the diction should be like the two wings of a bird. However, although it goes without saying that feeling and language should be in balance, a certain inferiority of diction is preferable to a deficiency of feeling.

Although I have explained these various matters to you, the question still remains of how to define a truly superior poem. In truth, the Middle Way of Poetry<sup>47</sup> can be understood only by the individual alone. Under no circumstances can a person depend upon others to teach it to him. As for the traditions of the various houses,<sup>48</sup> they all differ concerning the techniques and poetic styles they consider the best. Shun'e<sup>49</sup> is reputed to have said, 'In poetry strive to be as a child,' and it would seem that those of his own poems he most esteemed were in just such a style.<sup>50</sup> Toshiyori seems to have thought an in-

<sup>46</sup> See n. 21, above.

<sup>47</sup> *Uta no chūdō* 歌の中道. Teika probably borrows this term from Shunzei, who in his *Korai Fūteishō* speaks of poetry in terms of the three kinds of truth, or *santai* 三諦, in Tendai Buddhist doctrine: *kū* 空, the truth that all existence is insubstantial and void; *ke* 仮, the truth that although all existence is void it has a provisional reality; and *chū* 中, the truth that neither *kū* nor *ke* is correct, but that there is a reality that transcends this dichotomy, called the Middle Way. The transcendent art of poetry is likened to this transcendent Middle Way of Tendai Buddhism. Matsuno, *Korai Fūteishō*, p. 120, lines 14–15.

<sup>48</sup> In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, three main families or houses were recognized authorities on waka: the Mikohidari family of Shunzei and Teika; the Rokujō 六条 house descended from Fujiwara Akisue 藤原顕季, 1055–1123, who were the

arch-rivals of the Mikohidari; and the family line descended from Minamoto Tsunenobu.

<sup>49</sup> Shun'e 俊恵, 1113-ca. 1191, was the son of the important innovative poet Minamoto Toshiyori and grandson of Tsunenobu. From the 1150s through the 1170s, Shun'e was the leader of a group of poets who gathered at his priest's quarters in Shirakawa for poetry sessions and contests. The group was called Karin'en 歌林苑, or 'Forest Garden of Poetry', after the name of his residence. His most prominent disciple, Kamo no Chōmei, recorded his teacher's pronouncements on poetry in his important treatise and miscellany, *Mumyōshō* 無名抄 ('Untitled Notes'), translated by Hilda Katō in MN, 23:3–4, 1968, pp. 321–425.

<sup>50</sup> No documentary source for such a statement has been found, although Chōmei quotes Shun'e as saying, 'Odd though it may sound, I, Shun'e, still compose my poems with the same thoughtfulness as when I was a

describably lofty style to be best.<sup>51</sup> And the other poets all have their own varying prescriptions. With my poor mind it is impossible to decide among them. It is the way with men that the more they learn about a particular subject, the more of an undertaking it seems to become, and this would appear to be especially true of poetry. When by my own lights I compare the poetry of the past and present, nearly every poem of today seems grossly inferior to those of old, and seldom do I come upon one that strikes me as just possibly good. By now, indeed, I have come to appreciate the teachings of the great men of old, who said of this Art that the more one gazes up at it, the more lofty and unattainable it appears.<sup>52</sup>

First and foremost, the poetic effect that might be called characteristic of a superior poem is free and unrestricted by the particular subject matter. It is not identifiable as any one of the ten styles I have named, and yet seems to hold within itself all of them together. It is rich in overtones, yet uncomplicated in conception. It gives an impression of rightness and propriety, like the sight of a man impeccably attired in formal court dress. What most people understand to be a fine poem is essentially an unremarkable verse<sup>53</sup> composed smoothly and easily, rather superficial yet with a certain dignity. But such a notion is quite erroneous. For if we were to call such verses as that superior, then any poem at all we might write could be a fine one. No, first the powers of invention must be freed by reciting endless possibilities over and over to oneself. Then, suddenly and spontaneously, from among all the lines one is composing, may emerge a poem whose treatment of the topic is different from the common run, a verse that is somehow superior to the rest. It is full of poetic feeling, lofty in cadence, skillful, with resonances above and beyond the words themselves. It is dignified in effect, its phrasing original, yet smooth and gentle. It is interesting, suffused with an atmosphere subtle yet clear. It is

beginner.' Katō, p. 391. Also, according to Former Emperor Go-Toba, 'Priest Shun'e composed in a smooth, quiet manner. He is said to have declared that a poem should be composed so that it seems to glide as smoothly as a drop of water rolling down the length of a five-foot iris leaf.' Brower, 'Go-Toba's Secret Teachings', p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> In his poetic treatise known as *Toshiyori Zuinō* 俊頼髓脳 ('Toshiyori's Marrow of Poetry'), Minamoto Toshiyori wrote: 'A lofty dignity and grandeur should be one's principal aim.' Hashimoto Fumio, ed., *Toshiyori Zuinō*, in *Karonshū*, NKBZ 50, p. 90.

<sup>52</sup> Shunzei: 'Truly, with this Art of Japanese Poetry, the more one probes into it the more impenetrable it is, and the more one gazes up at it the more lofty it becomes.'

Preface to *Senzaishū*, in Yamagishi Tokuhei 山岸徳平, ed., *Hachidaishū Zenchū* 八代集全註, Yūseidō, 1960, 2, pp. 307–08. Shunzei is alluding in turn to a passage in the Confucian *Analects*.

<sup>53</sup> *Mumon naru uta* 無文なる歌, literally, 'an unpatterned verse'. The metaphor is from the weaving of cloth, in which the pattern does not stand out from the background. In the structure of poetic sequences of thirty, fifty, or especially a hundred poems—a popular form of composition in the *Shinkokinshū* age—poets consciously varied the rhythm, pace, and tension by distributing a small number of rhetorically or imagistically striking *mon no uta* 文の歌, or 'design poems', among a large number of *ji no uta* 地の歌, or plain, unremarkable 'background verses'.

richly evocative, its emotion not tense and nervous but sensible from the appropriateness of the imagery. Such a poem is not to be composed by conscious effort, but if a man will only persist in unremitting practice, he may produce one spontaneously.

In both older poetry and that of the present day, one sometimes finds verses that sound as if the writer had been quite unable to express his meaning. Such an impression would seem to be given particularly by those in the early stages of training. At the same time, occasionally a skilled poet will write a poem in which he deliberately breaks off at a certain point. However, to make a poem elliptical and ambiguous is a technique for accomplished poets. When an inexperienced novice attempts it out of envy of his betters even though he cannot possibly imitate the effect, he succeeds only in creating a most painful impression.

One thing that is absolutely unacceptable in poetry is a self-consciously fancy verse.<sup>54</sup> An ornate verse that just happens to come about of itself as a person is composing a number of poems may be allowed to pass, perhaps, but precious verses consciously contrived in a desperate effort to sound clever and original are extremely ugly and distasteful.

Again, in regard to the method of using a foundation poem,<sup>55</sup> as I have written to you previously,<sup>56</sup> it is only for the most accomplished poets to use a poem, just as it is, on cherry blossoms for one of their own on cherry blossoms, or a poem on the moon for one on the moon. Instead, an older poem on spring should be used for a verse on autumn or winter, or a poem on love for one on a mixed or seasonal topic—yet it should be done in such a way that it is clear that the older poem has been used. On the other hand, taking too many of the words of the foundation poem must be avoided. The proper method, perhaps, is to use two phrases or so that seem to be the very essence of the older poem, and space them out between the upper and

<sup>54</sup> *Shūku* 秀句, literally, 'fine lines'. A poem over-decorated with various forms of word-play and fancy rhetoric. Shunzei had commented as judge of the Poetry Contest in Six Hundred Rounds (*Roppyakuban Utaawase* 六百番歌合) in 1192: 'If a poem were to win on the basis of fancy lines, the Art of Poetry would become more and more ugly.' Konishi Jin'ichi 小西甚一, ed., *Shinkō Roppyakuban Utaawase* 新校六百番歌合, Yūseidō, 1976, p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> *Honkadōri* 本歌取り, the technique of allusive variation: employing the words, or sometimes alluding less directly to the situation or conception, of a well-known older poem in a new composition. The allusion was made in such a way that recognizable portions

of the older poem were incorporated into a new meaning, creating a kind of montage effect in which the meaning and situation of the older poem were contrasted or harmonized with the new. The technique became especially popular during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, thanks largely to Shunzei and Teika, and is one of the hallmarks of the *Shinkokin* style. See JCP, Chapter 6, *passim*.

<sup>56</sup> Teika had given prescriptions for the use of older poems as the basis for allusive variations in his *Kindai Shūka* and *Eiga no Taigai*, and possibly in other writings no longer extant. The prescription given here is the most detailed in any of Teika's existing writings. It may be assumed that his previous instructions to his pupil on this subject were much briefer.

lower verses<sup>57</sup> of the new one. Suppose one were to use the following poem, for example:

<i>Yūgure wa</i>	In the gathering dusk,
<i>Kumo no hatate ni</i>	I turn my longing far away,
<i>Mono zo omou</i>	Up into the clouds,
<i>Amatsusora naru</i>	Because the one I love dwells there
<i>Hito o kou tote.</i>	In remote celestial realms. <sup>58</sup>

In this case, one might take the words, ‘far away, up into the clouds’ and ‘I turn my longing’, distribute them between the upper and lower verses, and make one’s new poem on a mixed<sup>59</sup> or seasonal topic or something other than love. These days, when people employ this particular poem, they sometimes use the words, ‘in the gathering dusk’ along with the others, and there would appear to be no particular objection to including such an ordinary phrase as that. On the other hand, it is bad simply to appropriate an unusual phrase that may be regarded as the very heart of the foundation poem, whereas nothing is accomplished, either, by employing a poem in such an obscure manner that it does not look as if it had been used at all. So these things must be carefully understood when using a foundation poem.

Next, in regard to distributing the words of the topic,<sup>60</sup> in the case of a one-word topic, the word should always be placed in the lower lines of the poem no matter how many times it is done. With topics of two, three, or more words, they should be distributed between the upper and lower lines. For a compound topic,<sup>61</sup> the worst possible thing is said to be to group it all in one place. It is also unfortunate when a poem reveals the words of the topic in the very first line. Although examples of this kind of thing can be found, to be sure, among the superior poems of old, they should not be taken as models. Indeed, this must absolutely not be done. On the other hand, in the case of a poem that has otherwise turned out well, I have been taught<sup>62</sup> that an excep-

<sup>57</sup> *Kami no ku* 上句 and *shimo no ku* 下句: respectively, the first three lines and the last two lines of a poem.

<sup>58</sup> *Kokinshū*, 11:484. The circumstances of composition of this anonymous poem are unknown, but the context implies a male speaker in love with a court lady far above him in rank.

<sup>59</sup> *Zō* 雑, a topic that is not on love, a season, or any other category overtly distinguished in the imperial anthologies. From *Kokinshū* on, the imperial collections contained one or more books of poems on ‘mixed’ topics, and the category was taken over into poetry contests, personal collections, and poetic sequences.

<sup>60</sup> Decorum required that either the actual word or words of the poetic topic, or sometimes synonyms or closely related words, must be incorporated into a poem. Thus, a poem on ‘cherry blossoms’ must include the image of blossoms, whereas a poem on ‘spring’ might fulfill the requirements by employing the imagery of plum blossoms, haze, or other phenomena associated with spring.

<sup>61</sup> *Musubidai* 結題, a topic consisting of two or more substantive elements, such as ‘Love in the Mountains’, or ‘A Distant View of Islands in the Sea’.

<sup>62</sup> By Shunzei, presumably.

tion may be made to this rule if there is no other suitable place for the words of the topic except in the first five-syllable line.

With respect to the poetic ills,<sup>63</sup> the 'ill of identical beginnings'<sup>64</sup> is of no importance, but the 'ill of rhyming syllables'<sup>65</sup> must be avoided without fail. Poems that have the ill of identical beginnings, too, are inferior to those that do not. As for the Four Ills, the Eight Ills, and so on, everyone knows about these, so there is no need for me to rehearse them all over again. If a poem is intrinsically so good that a particular ill, whatever it may be, cannot harm it, it is idle to be concerned about it. At the same time, a bad poem made even worse by a poetic ill would be utterly worthless.

Caution should be taken about using the same expressions repeatedly in three, or five, or even as many as ten poems in a sequence.<sup>66</sup> It is permissible to use quite ordinary words over again many times, but in the case of unusual expressions that strike the ear, even though they may not be very long, it is quite unpleasant when phrases of two or three words are repeated many times over. His Lordship my late father also warned against giving the impression that one has a preference for particular expressions, and I cannot but agree that this is very bad. On the other hand, such words as 'clouds', 'wind', 'evening', and so on, will not, I think, be offensive no matter how many times one uses them. Here too, in the case of good poems that it would otherwise be a pity to discard, they may be left as they are, even though they repeat the same phrases a number of times. But when poems that are bad to begin with compound the evil by using the same words over and over again the results are sure to be disastrous.

At the present time, it seems that even the better poets are employing such phrases as 'the spring of dawn'<sup>67</sup> and 'the autumn of dusk',<sup>68</sup> but you must ab-

<sup>63</sup> *Kabyō*, or *uta no yamai*, 歌病. By analogy with Chinese poetics, some of the older Japanese poetic treatises attempted to impose upon the waka certain taboos concerning rhyme, sound repetitions, and so on. Thus, *Kakyō Hyōshiki* 歌経標式, dated 722, distinguishes seven poetic ills; *Kisen Shiki* 喜撰式 (of unknown date; perhaps mid-Heian), four; and *Hikohime Shiki* 孫姫式 (mid-tenth century?), eight. Inasmuch as these rules bore little or no relation to the realities of the Japanese language and the actual practice of waka, they were mostly ignored. Nevertheless, they were often referred to in poetic treatises, and it was necessary for poets to know about them, particularly for poetry contests, where one of the ills might be invoked by a legalistically minded judge in order to disqualify a poem.

<sup>64</sup> *Byōtō no yamai* 平頭の病: having the first

and fourth lines of a poem begin with the same syllable.

<sup>65</sup> *Seiin no yamai* 声韻の病: having the third and fifth lines end with the same syllable.

<sup>66</sup> Teika presumably has in mind a hundred-poem sequence, the most common length in this period and the length of the monthly batches of poems his pupil has been sending him.

<sup>67</sup> *Akebono no haru*.

<sup>68</sup> *Yūgure no aki*. The priest Genshō 源承, 1224-post 1303, Tameie's second son, tells the following anecdote in his treatise, *Waka Kuden* 和歌口伝 ('Secret Teachings on Japanese Poetry'), ca. 1294-1297:

'Around the Ninji era [1240-1242], a devotee of poetry known as the Venerable Sonkai of Nara, thinking it trite to be always writing "the autumn dusk" in poems, composed a verse with "the autumn of dusk",

solutely not follow their example. For although they pretentiously string together such expressions as ‘the spring of dawn’ and ‘the autumn of dusk’, their meaning is no more than if they had said ‘the autumn dusk’ or ‘the spring dawn’. If in the conception, at least, they had created something new and pleasing by changing the order of the words, that would have been wonderful indeed, but in fact this sort of thing appears to have no point to it at all. Of all things it is one of the silliest. Such practices as this would seem to lead to the decline of poetry. And as I have repeatedly stressed in the past, they must be scrupulously avoided.<sup>69</sup>

With respect to the ten styles I have mentioned above, they should be taught with an eye to the temperament of the pupil. For both the gifted and the untalented have an individual style that is congenial to them. What is the good of insisting that a pupil who is at home in the style of mystery and depth learn to compose in the demon-quelling style, or of requiring a person who is good at the lofty style to write instead in the style of exquisite detail? Indeed, it is said that the Buddha himself explained the Law in many different ways, depending upon the capacities of the people.<sup>70</sup> Poetry is no different. It would result in terrible damage to the Art of Poetry to insist that a person who has no disposition for it compose in a certain style that the teacher prefers simply because he happens to find it personally congenial to himself. A given style should be

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whereupon the Former Middle Counsellor Teika wrote to him saying that he must absolutely never, never do such a thing. So how could such expressions as “the vesper of bell” or “the spring of dawn” be acceptable?” *Genshō Waka Kuden*, in NKT, 4, p. 16.

It may be noted that this passage has been advanced as evidence that *Maigetsushō* is a forgery, the argument being that if it had existed when Genshō wrote his treatise, he would certainly have referred to it in connection with this anecdote. However, others argue that the era name Ninji 仁治 is an error for Shōji 正治, 1191–1200, or that Genshō, although Teika’s grandson, may not have been familiar with *Maigetsushō*, or else may have simply chosen not to mention it. See Fujihira, *Maigetsushō*, p. 524, n. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Teika’s other extant writings yield no exact duplicate of this injunction, but the prefatory essay to *Kindai Shūka* shows a similar concern with artificial expressions and mannerisms:

‘The students of the Art among the younger generation today appear sincerely to think they are composing real poetry, while actually they know nothing about its proper style. They make a fetish of obscurity, changing

what ought to be simple into something difficult, yoking together things that have no relation to each other—perhaps because it has become universal for people to choose the most inappropriate poems as models.’

And also, in a note at the end of the ‘version sent away’ of *Kindai Shūka*:

‘What I mean by changing what ought to be simple into something difficult and yoking together things that have no relation to each other are such expressions as “the wind falls” and “the snow blows”, or “the floating wind” and “the first clouds”.’ (The normal expressions would be ‘the wind blows’ and ‘the snow falls’, ‘the floating clouds’ and ‘the first wind’. See Brower & Miner, *Teika’s Superior Poems*, p. 43.)

However, those who believe *Maigetsushō* a forgery point to the lack of exact parallels to this passage in the treatise as further evidence in support of their theory. See Fujihira, *Maigetsushō*, p. 525, n. 4.

<sup>70</sup> A reference to the Buddhist concept of *hōben* 方便: that the Buddha availed himself of temporary or provisional teachings in order to lead sentient beings to the final doctrine, adapting his discourse at any given stage to the level of understanding of his hearers.

taught to a pupil only after careful study of the particular style of poem he tends to compose. For with every style it is essential to keep in mind that it must be honest and right. Again, by this I do not mean that you should immerse yourself in one particular style and reject all of the others, but rather that it is not impermissible to have a favorite style one finds most congenial and then with that as a basis compose in the various others. But above all, you must not forget to follow the proper course, or allow yourself to go wandering off in the wrong direction.

Even today the majority of those ranks of poets who think each other so accomplished fail to understand these principles and insist instead that their pupils copy their own peculiar styles, thus proving that they know absolutely nothing about the Art. Suppose one's pupil were capable of loftier flights than oneself and were endowed by nature with the ability to compose poetry of a high order—in that case, what good would such teaching accomplish? It would also appear that Toshiyori Ason, Kiyosuke, and other masters have spoken to this very point in their manuals of instruction.<sup>71</sup> One must take special pains to teach in such a way as to protect the pupil from going off on the wrong tangent. Even someone of considerable natural talent will tend to go astray when he composes poetry according to his own fancy, without receiving instruction. How much the more so a person of no talent, for when such a one tries to practice composition, insisting on doing it in his own way, he will succeed in growing steadily worse, but never will he be able to find the true path.<sup>72</sup>

It is particularly important to exercise discrimination in judging poetry, and to distinguish the good from the bad—although it seems that actually everyone just does it by guesswork. The reason would appear to be that a poem by someone who is said to be a good poet will be praised even though it is nothing out of the ordinary, whereas if it is by someone not thought to be of any particular account, people will criticize and go out of their way to find some fault in the poem, although it may in fact be an unusually good one. In short, it seems that people judge a poem to be good or bad depending upon who the poet happens

<sup>71</sup> In his *Zuinō*, Toshiyori characterizes with brief comments examples of twenty different poetic styles and effects. See Hashimoto, *Toshiyori Zuinō*, pp. 91–99.

Fujiwara Kiyosuke 藤原清輔, 1104–1177, head of the Rokujō poetic house in the mid-twelfth century and Shunzei's predecessor as leading authority on poetry at court, left numerous critical writings. The reference here may be to his *Ōgishō* 奥儀抄 ('Notes on the Inner Significance of Poetry'), probably written between 1124 and 1144, in which he discusses the six principles (*rikugi* 六義), the ten styles, the nine grades of poetry (*waka kuhon* 和歌九品), and other matters appearing in earlier

poetic treatises. Fujihira, *Maigetsushō*, p. 526, n. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Just which teacher Teika had in mind in writing the foregoing section is not known, although his principal opponents during the early years of the thirteenth century were various members of the Rokujō family and their poetic faction, and his general disapproval of them may have extended to their teaching methods as well. As for the pupil, Teika's injunctions against going off on one's own without proper guidance would seem to be directed specifically at the recipient of *Maigetsushō*.



to be—a deplorable state of affairs in my opinion. This is because they have no idea of how to arrive at a proper evaluation. A person who can distinguish the good from the bad in the verses of the poets of old from the Kamyō era<sup>73</sup> and before, ought surely to be able to judge quality in poetry. But although I speak in this way, as if I knew all about it, stupid old man that I am, I have never learned how to do it myself. Nevertheless, I need not be so diffident on that account. For some time ago, during the Genkyū era,<sup>74</sup> when I made a retreat at Sumiyoshi,<sup>75</sup> I had a wonderful dream inspired by the God, in which I was told, ‘For you the moon is radiant.’ Because of this I wrote my ‘Record of the Full Moon’, so as to contribute to the poetic traditions of my house—although it was, I realize, a far greater task than I was worthy to perform. But writing to you and mentioning even such trifling matters as these makes me feel even more ashamed of myself.

Now it was said long ago that allusions to the ideas or the wording of old poems in Chinese was a practice to be avoided in Japanese poetry,<sup>76</sup> but it need not be completely shunned. As long as one does not make a habit of it, occasional Chinese allusions in one’s poems can give them a certain novelty. Therefore, as I have said previously, the essential materials are to be found in the first and second parts of the collected works of Po Chū-i, and you should study those.<sup>77</sup> Chinese poetry clears the mind and exalts the spirit. To be sure,

<sup>73</sup> 889–897. In *Kindai Shūka*, Teika had written: ‘If in diction you admire the traditional, if in treatment you attempt the new, if you aim at an unobtainably lofty effect, and if you study the poetry of Kamyō and before, then how can you fail to succeed?’ Brower & Miner, *Teika’s Superior Poems*, p. 44.

In both instances Teika obviously means by ‘Kamyō and before’ the mid-ninth century, that is, the age of the Six Poetic Immortals (*rokkasen* 六歌仙), when the early classical style epitomized in *Kokinshū* was in its most original and vigorous phase.

<sup>74</sup> 元久, 1204–1206. Concerning this passage, see pp. 404–05, above.

<sup>75</sup> 住吉, a popular shrine on the coast of the Inland Sea in modern Osaka. During the Heian period, the shrine came to be regarded as the abode of the god of poetry, and innumerable poets made retreats and offerings there, praying for poetic inspiration and success.

<sup>76</sup> The source of such a prohibition has not been identified. Allusions to Chinese poetry in the waka go back at least as far as the ninth century; *Kudai Waka* 句題和歌 (‘Japanese Poems on Chinese Lines’) of Ōe no Chisato, presented to Emperor Uda in 894, is the most important early example. Given the brevity of

the standard Japanese 31-syllable form, together with the Japanese habit of extracting favorite lines or couplets from longer Chinese poems and collecting them in anthologies, Japanese poems normally alluded to only a line or two of the Chinese original rather than the entire poem. Such allusions, together with allusions to famous Japanese prose works such as *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語, were called *honketsu* 本説, as distinguished from *honka* 本歌, older Japanese poems used as bases for allusive variation.

<sup>77</sup> During the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the poetry of the Chinese T’ang poet Po Chū-i 白居易, or Po Lo-t’ien 白樂天, 772–846, became increasingly popular among the waka poets, and the influence of his poetry came gradually to displace that of the Chinese Six Dynasties styles. Favorite couplets from Po’s poems were included in *Wakan Rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (‘A Collection of Japanese and Chinese Verse for Singing’) in the early eleventh century by Fujiwara Kintō, and in *Shinsen Rōeishū* 新撰朗詠集 (‘A Collection of Verse for Singing, Newly Selected’) compiled by Fujiwara Mototoshi 藤原基俊, 1060–1142, in the early years of the twelfth century.

Po’s collected works, called in Japanese *Hakushi Monjū* 白氏文集 (‘Collected Writings

when composing Japanese verse, if you are in the presence of persons of high rank, you should recite the lines over silently to yourself, whereas if the occasion is one on which such people are not present, you may recite them aloud. It is one of the fundamental procedures in Japanese poetry that one must first of all clear one's heart and mind. You should remember some Chinese or Japanese verses that have for some time particularly attracted you and compose your own poems with the help of those.

In the early stages of learning, a person should not push himself too far in trying to think of ideas for poems. For when he gets the notion that the only way to compose a poem is to think very hard about it, and keeps forcing himself without respite, his spirits may be dulled and indeed he may grow weary of the whole business. Thus, my late father's instructions to me were, 'Practice rapid composition in order to accustom yourself to composing poetry. But from time to time compose a poem that you have pondered deeply.'<sup>78</sup>

When the occasion is a formal court function, it may not be suitable to contribute too many poems. The same caution applies to both experienced poets and beginners. For the group composition of a hundred-poem sequence or the like,<sup>79</sup> the proper number of poems for a beginner to contribute would be four or five, and for an experienced poet seven or eight.

In the early stages you should practice constantly by yourself, composing poems freely one after the other both rapidly and slowly. But take care that the poems you have discarded are not scattered about so that other people can see them.

I was taught that the inexperienced poet should adhere to the topics to which he is accustomed.<sup>80</sup> My father warned me never for a moment to compose poetry in other than a formal sitting position.

of Master Po') were introduced into Japan at an early date, and he is the only Chinese poet to have been popular at the Japanese court during his own lifetime. The edition of his work circulated in Japan consisted of seventy-one books or scrolls in seven parts. The first and second parts recommended by Teika would correspond to Books 1 through 20.

Teika also wrote in his *Eiga no Taigai*: 'In order to understand the beauties of nature in the four seasons and the vicissitudes of human society, you should make constant reference to the first and second parts of the Collected Writings of Master Po.' Fujiwara Haruo, ed., *Eiga no Taigai*, in *Karonshū*, NKBZ, 50, p. 495.

<sup>78</sup> No specific source for this quotation has been identified, but no doubt Shunzei gave Teika many such instructions that were either never written down or else have not been

preserved.

<sup>79</sup> *Hyakushu nado no tsugiuta* 百首などの続歌: composing a set of a hundred poems at a group session, in which each participant contributed several poems. The topics for the sequence were often written out on individual poem slips and placed in a pile, from which each poet would draw his particular topics. The completed poems would be collected, sorted, and arranged to make a conventional sequence with the topics in the proper order. Sequences of thirty, fifty, or even a thousand poems were also composed in this manner. The practice became popular in the Kamakura period, and seems to have been related to the new and immediately popular use of *tanzaku* 短冊, or poem slips: long, narrow strips of stiff paper for writing individual poems and topics.

<sup>80</sup> Manuscripts of the Nijō line have a fairly

Again, you should ponder carefully the first five-syllable line of your poem, and put off writing it until last. For this reason, even the late lay priest my father used to jot down his ideas for first lines like notes alongside his other verses. Once, when people's poems were being read aloud,<sup>81</sup> a question was raised concerning this procedure, for it had excited considerable curiosity among the other participants. 'What is your purpose in writing your first lines next to your poems?' they asked. He replied,<sup>82</sup> 'It is a kind of note, because I wait until last to decide upon my first line.' This caused quite a stir among those present, and they seemed to think they had discovered an ingenious idea.

Having written about these sundry matters hastily and on the spur of the moment, I am appalled to think that the results are so deplorably vague and disorganized. However, feeling that I could not ignore your earnest desire to receive instruction from me, I have written down my various mistaken notions about the Art of Poetry. Please do not under any circumstances allow anyone else to see this. Indeed, concerning this Art in which I have disciplined my foolish old self these many years, I have no other instructions to give you apart from these. I have written down absolutely everything I know. In reading this over, please understand that it contains the basic essentials of this poetic Art.<sup>83</sup>

With deep respect.

lengthy passage between this sentence and the next. It is possible that the passage was originally a marginal note written by a student or copyist that was later mistakenly incorporated into the text. Whatever the reasons for this difference between the two traditions, the transition between this sentence and the following in the Reizei manuscripts is undeniably abrupt.

The passage is as follows: 'Troublesome topics that cannot be treated with ease will surely lead to bad results. But once you have become somewhat used to composing and feel you are ready to try them, you should accustom yourself to composing on topics that require unusual dexterity in handling. For unless you try your hand at such difficult topics, you will never be able to cope with them. You should be certain always to compose your poems in a formal sitting position. If you ponder your verses when standing up or lying down, and get used to composing with your body in complete freedom, on public occasions, when it is felt that such behavior violates the rules of etiquette, you will be quite unable to compose your poems. Once a person develops such eccentricities, the situation becomes completely hopeless. I was taught that every activity is elegant and seemly only when performed with the proper demeanor.

My father warned me never for a moment to compose poems in other than the correct sitting posture.'

<sup>81</sup> At a poetry gathering, after the poem had been written down by the participants, collected, and passed to the Reader (*kōshi* 講師) to be read aloud to the group. During this process, Shunzei's poem slips would presumably have been seen and remarked upon by a number of people.

<sup>82</sup> In a work commonly called *Kyōgoku Chūnagon Sōgo* 京極中納言相語 ('Conversations with the Kyōgoku Middle Counsellor'), a brief set of remarks on poetry exchanged between Teika and Fujiwara Ietaka 藤原家隆, 1158–1237, and recorded by Teika's pupil Fujiwara Nagatsuna 藤原長綱, fl. ca. 1230, Teika is represented as saying that he himself was the first person to propose writing out the lower verses of a poem first, and then working backward on the upper verses, writing down the first line last of all. *Kyōgoku Chūnagon Sōgo*, in NKT, 3, p. 381, line 1.

This 'anomaly' is taken by some scholars as further evidence that *Maigetsushō* is spurious, but surely there is no anomaly in interpreting the passage as showing that Shunzei began the practice with his own poems and Teika then picked it up and introduced and advocated it to others.

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<sup>83</sup> At the end of the brief prefatory essay to his *Kindai Shūka*, sent to Sanetomo in 1209, Teika had written:

‘These things merely represent the few ideas I have, for I have never studied or learned anything about general principles of evaluating poetry, of telling the bad from the good. Still less do I know about the explication of difficult passages and things of that sort, concerning which I understand that each poetic house and family has its own special customs and traditions, for I never had anything about such matters passed on to me by my father. Then, too, since the little knowledge I have differs in no respect from what various other people have recorded, it would be superfluous for me to write it down all over again myself, although the views of

other poetic houses apparently differ somewhat from my own.’ Brower & Miner, *Teika's Superior Poems*, pp. 45–47.

Although Teika consistently maintained that poetry ultimately could not be taught but had to be experienced by each individual for himself, he was prevailed upon in the case of *Maigetsushō* to impart considerably more detailed and specific advice and instruction than in *Kindai Shūka*. If the recipient of both treatises was the same person, that is, Sanetomo, one can imagine, as I suggest above, p. 405, Teika reluctantly yielding to his importunings over a considerable period of time. It may also be a matter of *hōben*, truth adapted to the capacities of the recipient at a particular stage of his development.